

Erie County Fire Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2006

Call to Order & Opening Prayer: The meeting was called to order by Chairman G Wittington who also led with an opening prayer.

Roll Call:

Chairman Gerald Wittington	Present	Co-Chairman Douglas Larkin	Present
Sec./Treasurer John Wicka	Present	Dennis Allen	Present
Bruce Atkins	Present	Charles Bethge	Present
William Boldt	Present	Todd Catalano	Present
Donald Connolly	Present	James Fyock	Present
Dennis Gibbs	Absent	Christopher Higgins	Present
Daniel Kamman	Present	Michael Lombardo	Present
James Lawida	Excused	Richard Litfin	Present
Michael Lombardo	Present	Richard Mariani	Excused
Steve Matisz	Present	James Pluta	Present
Ronald Rozler	Present	Edward Saturnus	Present
Charles Stewart	Present	William G. Szewc	Present

Also in attendance were Commissioner K. Comerford, Deputy Commissioner J McCullough and Legislators D Kozub and J. Mills.

Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting: Accepted with one minor change to the attendance.

Commissioner's & Committee Reports

Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Comerford briefed the board on the following:

- 800 MHz - The legislature approved the building operations center agreement with SWN. Testing is scheduled for December 2005 of the system. The legislature's assistance has been very helpful in getting this moved along. SWN continues to see how the coverage gaps will be filled-in so that the 95% of in-building coverage is done. M/A Comm has to make the system work and he addressed the rumors being circulated that the coverage will stop at Transit Road. This is not only absurd but completely false.
- Proposed Department of Public Safety structure – He distributed a recent and revised organization chart of the proposed structure. It is very close to what was discussed previously. Dedicated funding for the department will be addressed as a separate issue. Legislator Kozub advised the proposal will need to go through a public referendum and a public hearing. He is looking for input from interested parties and the public. In his personal opinion, he doesn't see the workability of a 15 board of trustees and feels a seven person board would be more desirable. More information can be obtained at www.eriecharterreview.org.
- 2004 FEMA Grants for 800 MHz radios – Commissioner Comerford advised that Congressman Higgins' office sent a letter to DHS Secretary Chertoff and a return correspondence was received questioning when the timetable for ordering and employing the radios. This is considered a positive movement with this project.
- Commissioner Comerford answered a question regarding 9-1-1 dispatching and the Sheriff's department. It is basically a call volume issue and call switching options with Verizon and Buffalo PD. More information will be reported when received.
- Clerical staff for Fire Safety – Commissioner Comerford advised this is being looked at in the 2007 budget. In the short term, assistance is being looked at by getting fill-in help from other offices and departments. Legislator Kozub advised a resolution was introduced to get additional help this year.
- Briefed the board on communication vehicles providing radio caches. This is a program being offered by the federal government and provides for redundancy in the provision of cross band communications. These vehicles will be located round the county so that the system can be operational within 1 hour of an incident requiring cross band communications.

Deputy Commissioner's Report: Deputy McCullough presented his report, which is attached.

Officer Reports:

Chairman's Report

Chairman Whittington gave an update on the alerting program and what the vendors will be supplying and installing at fire departments. He also gave a draft of the information to be distributed to fire departments with regard to the equipment and installation locations. He also presented other information on the project and how it will operate. He also said there are false rumors being circulated with regard to alerting area coverage. These issues are being addressed to eliminate concerns.

800 MHz – SWN is conducting a build-out survey looking at tower locations, etc. He addressed false rumors about loss of funding for radios (the seven departments who continue were approved for FEMA funds). Gateways are being planned for to provide inter-operability with systems operating 400 MHz. Also briefs the board on the use of ACU1000 units.

Co-Chairman's Report: No report.

Secretary' Report: Nothing to report

Reading of Correspondence: The correspondence was read and those items needing further attention were held for old or new business.

School Committee: C Stewart briefed the board about individual fire companies using county fire training facilities without a county instructor. He advised that a meeting was held with Deputy Commissioner McCullough and Training Coordinator Schmittenfand and it was determined that due to firefighter safety, it is required that at least one county instructor be present at the evolution. This also addresses liability issues. Also, a county instructor on site make sure the facility is left in good condition and ready for the next department using it. Yet to be determined is if this policy is in writing. They will look at when this policy was implemented and see when it was put into written form.

Also discussed was the matter of T Wutz from OFPC meeting with the FAB to discuss the October 2005 incident. Chairman Whittington advised that Chief Wutz is expected at the June meeting to discuss this and other matters.

Drill Towers Committee: WG Swecz reported he visited Chestnut Ridge and the Cheektowaga facilities and plans on visiting Amherst next week. He is waiting to hear how much money is available to make the needed repairs at the facilities. He is also interested in learning how much money, if any, is available to replace buildings and facilities in the future. Legislator Kozub advised the county is still working on a budget prepared and approved by the previous legislature and they are looking to see what money is available to move projects forward.

Chairman Whittington advised this is a matter for the Budget committee to be involved in and to see how much monies are left over from the 2004 budget regarding capital expenditures. The items that were dropped should be pursued to be resurrected with adjustments to reflect current costs. Legislator Kozub suggested inviting all parties to a meeting with the Building & Grounds Department and the legislature in order for everyone to hear, first hand, about the condition of the facilities.

Radio Committee: Much was covered in previous reports. Also discussed the radio survey conducted with all fire companies. Three departments still have not yet responded.

Deputy Commissioner McCullough reported Holland is having problems with reception/transmission. They are looking into installing an antenna on the tower at Holland Speedway as this tower was erected with the understanding that it would be available for public safety use.

C Bethge reported a repeater was installed at Jamison Road water tower for use of 400 MHz and will be utilized by East Aurora.

Legislation & Fire Prevention: No report

Budget & Wall of Fame: No report

Rules & Mutual Aid: D Connolly reported he is waiting for the charter review changes. There will be a meeting with certain town chief organizations and the City of Buffalo to discuss mutual aid plans.

Erie County Chiefs: B Boldt advised the last meeting was held in Lancaster and the issue of additional clerical help for Fire Safety was discussed. A fall seminar

Erie County Vol. Firemen's Assoc.: No report

Fire District Officers: C Bethge reported the state meeting was held in Buffalo in late April/early May and it was a good meeting. Randy Rider from Sheridan Park is the new president of the organization. Comptroller Alan Hevesi was the keynote speaker and gave a good presentation in issues affecting the fire service.

Fire Police: B Atkins reported the next meeting is July 18.

Old Business None

New Business

EC Legislator Dan Kozub, who is Chairman of the legislature's Public Safety Committee addressed the board and gave his position regarding public safety initiatives and responsibilities of the legislature. A discussion followed with questions and answers.

Treasurer's Report

The previous balance was \$278.82 with \$23.00 received tonight for a new total worth of \$301.82.

Adjournment

Prior to adjournment, Chairman Whittington addressed the board on the need for all committees to meet and get issues that have been dormant moving ahead. Many issues are out there that are important and need to have action taken on. A discussion followed with commitments and understandings of the actions that need to be taken.

M Lombardo offered to have the City of Buffalo host the July meeting on the Fireboat Cotter. The board accepted the offer and notices will be give to all so scheduling can be accommodated.

With no further business to conduct, WG Swecz made a motion to adjourn the meeting with the next meeting scheduled for June 29. T Catalano seconded the motion, which was duly voted on and carried.

Respectfully submitted
John R. Wicka
Secretary/Treasurer

May 2006

Report on the use of Erie County owned training facilities by individual Fire Companies, Departments and Districts.

At the March meeting of the Fire Advisory Board I was requested to investigate whether or not individual fire companies and their officers should be allowed to utilize County Training facilities on their own to conduct training exercises. I believe that it is because of the lack of available FF1 training opportunities for many of the county's newer volunteer firefighters that this issue has been brought up.

Since then I have had several discussions with Tiger Schmittendorf, Jim McCullough and Brian Benstead on this subject. Through these discussions it has been explained to me that it is the county's strict policy to require at least one County Fire Instructor to be present at any training session held by any fire agency. And, that this instructor shall provide guidance and oversee that a certain amount of safety is ensured for all present. Additionally, if a FF1 class is to be conducted (certified or not), 3 instructors must be present (as per NYS rules).

This policy is in place for two main reasons.

First, it is to ensure that firefighter safety is adhered to. While many fire companies have members who are experienced and capable of ensuring firefighter safety during training sessions, there is no guarantee for the county that each agency that shows up has competent personnel in place to handle all safety concerns. Because this is county property there is a certain amount of assumed liability if an injury or death were to occur to a firefighter during a training session despite the fact that it happened during a company drill. Again, the county's policy of assigning an instructor has been established mainly to provide an element of safety and limit the chance of injury.

The second reason for this policy is to ensure that county training facilities are properly utilized and returned to a reasonably tidy and neat condition following the drill or exercise. It has been the county's experience that on many past occasions the facilities were abused and/or left in an unacceptable condition. Having a county instructor present has eliminated or at the very least significantly limited this abuse.

It is my opinion that, given the fact that the county is the owner of these facilities, they are entitled to establish and enforce these rules. While not all members of the firefighting community may agree with this policy, especially those who may have access to county facilities in the past, firefighter safety must remain a priority and these rules are designed to do just that.

Respectively,

Chief Charles B. Stuart – ECFAB/School Committee Chair



County of Erie

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County Executive

JAMES M. McCULLOUGH
Deputy Commissioner
Fire Safety

EARL R. SCHMITTENDORF
Assistant Fire Coordinator

DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Division of Fire Safety

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ERIE COUNTY FIRE ADVISORY BOARD FIRE SAFETY OFFICE REPORT MAY 25, 2006

- On Tuesday May 30, 2006 our office will be sending out canvassing letters of possible openings as County Fire Instructors (part time) & State Fire Instructors (Part time). The deadline will be Thursday June 15th, 2006. All candidates must fulfill the requirements.
- Our office needs to know from each town the number of Firefighters that need Firefighter 1 course. I need this information by the June meeting.
- On Monday June 5, 2006 we are having 6 inmates from the Gowanda State Prison coming in and assist us in some maintenance work around the academy.
- We are awaiting the estimate for the concrete work to be done at the Cheektowaga facility.
- I am still working on building a Roof Simulator at the Cheektowaga training academy; I will be meeting with the Boces School to see if they are interested in building such a structure in the fall, I will notify the Drill Committee as soon as I have the plans together.
- Regarding the work done for Langford FD, due to illness at the radio shop the work was delayed. (Jim Fyock)

- The Highway Safety Awareness Course, that was given this AM went very well, within 3 ½ hours gave a lot of great information. I would highly recommend all firefighters to take this course when it comes available.
- Firefighter 1 Boot Camp will be starting with 50 firefighters in July, running two classes at the same time. Looking forward to another great success.
- Tower dates are in full swing, I am working on a two month schedule. July & August will be assigned in the middle of June 2006.
- Certificates; There are no State Certificates in the state at all. They have a new Secretary of State and I believe that may be the hold up. But as soon as we have them, the firefighters will have them.

Jim McCullough
FC – 1



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HELP WANTED

NYS OFPC State Fire Instructor (SFI) May 25, 2006

The Erie County Division of Fire Safety and New York State Office of Fire Prevention & Control are soliciting applications and resumes for the position of part-time State Fire Instructor (SFI).

SFIs are employed by New York State and must be able to teach 2-3 days or evenings per week (3-hour sessions), typically in Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday combinations, plus some Saturdays. Candidates must be able to attend at least one (1) weeklong instructor certification conference initially and at least every two years thereafter.

The following are the training and educational requirements for this position:

1. Five (5) years experience as a career or volunteer firefighter with two (2) years as an instructor at the company officer level.
2. Completion of the following NYS OFPC Training Programs or national certifications* at the levels indicated:
 - *Firefighting Essentials AND Initial Fire Attack -OR- Basic & Intermediate Firefighter AND Ladder Company Operations -OR- Pump Operations, AND Preparing for Command -OR- Introduction to Fire Officer I, AND Training Officer Workshop I and II, Educational Methodology -OR- Fire Instructor I;*
 - OR-
 - *National Certification as a Firefighter I, AND Ladder Company Operations -OR- Pump Operations, AND Preparing for Command -OR- Introduction to Fire Officer I, AND Training Officer Workshop I and II, Educational Methodology -OR- Fire Instructor I;*
 - OR-
 - *National Certification as a Firefighter I and Instructor I, AND Ladder Company Operations or Pump Operations, AND Preparing for Command -OR- Introduction to Fire Officer I,*
 - OR-
 - *National Certification as a Firefighter I, Instructor I, & Officer I*

NOTE: Substitution for required training or certifications may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

*=Appropriate certificates from IFSAC or Pro Board.

Interested and qualified individuals should forward a cover letter and resume along with photocopies of all appropriate certifications to the Fire Safety Office.

Application Deadline is: June 15, 2006

Click fire@erie.gov or Call 716/681-7111 for further information



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HELP WANTED

Erie County Fire Instructor (CFI)

May 25, 2006

The Erie County Division of Fire Safety periodically accepts applications and resumes for the position of part-time county fire instructor. Candidates meeting the minimum qualifications as outlined below may be canvassed to fill vacancies or additional openings. Interviews and appointments are scheduled and conducted as necessary.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Five (5) years of documented responsible career or volunteer firefighting experience. (Letter of chief officer recommendation is acceptable)
- Two (2) years of documented experience as an instructor, training officer or training coordinator at the company level. (Letter of chief officer recommendation is acceptable)
- Completion of the following NYS OFPC Training Programs or national certifications* at the levels indicated:
 - New York State or National Certification as a Fire Service Instructor I -AND-
 - 02-Firefighting Essentials -AND- 03-Fire Behavior & Arson Awareness -AND- 10-Initial Fire Attack, -OR- 91-Basic Firefighter -AND- 92-Intermediate Firefighter,
 - -OR- NYS OFPC Certification as a Firefighter I,
 - -OR- National Certification as a Firefighter I,
 - AND 87-Firefighter Survival
 - AND (06-Ladder Company Operations -OR- 1F-Truck Company Operations)
 - AND (08-Pump Operations -OR- 78-Apparatus Operator-Pump -OR- 38-Water Supply Operations)
 - AND 23-Commanding the Initial Response -OR- 25-Preparing for Command -OR- 45-Introduction to Fire Officer I
 - AND 1A-Live Fire Training Safety
 - AND 1B-Conducting Live Fire Training Evolutions

NOTE: Substitution for required training or certifications may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

*=Appropriate certificates from IFSAC or Pro Board.

- Must be an active interior qualified firefighter in a volunteer or career fire department at the time of appointment and remain as such every year of service.
- Must possess the physical ability to perform all tasks associated with the instructional assignments.
- Must successfully pass a firefighter medical examination at the time of appointment and every year of service.
- Must obtain and maintain a medical certification to use a full-face piece respirator self-contained breathing apparatus as specified in 29 CFR 1910.134.
- Must be able to attend at least one (1) weeklong instructor certification conference at the State Fire Academy initially and periodically thereafter.

Application:

Interested candidates should deliver a pre-employment package to the Fire Safety Office consisting of:

- Completed "Erie County Application for Examination or Employment" (available from the Fire Safety Office or downloadable from <http://www.erie.gov/employment/public.phtml>)
- Resume with cover letter
- Copies of training certificates and other appropriate documentation

NOTES: 1. Normal training classes are conducted in three (3) to four (4) hour sessions. 2. Instructors are interviewed and recommended for appointment by the Erie County Fire Advisory Board and Fire Safety Division staff. 3. Verifiable part-time and/or volunteer experience will be pro-rated toward meeting full-time experience requirements. 4. County Fire Instructors are appointed as part-time temporary employees for an unspecified period of time.

Application Deadline is: June 15, 2006

Please contact the Fire Safety Office at 716/681-7111 or by e-mail at: fire@erie.gov to request an application or further information. Applications are available for pick-up from the Fire Safety Office or can be downloaded from: <http://www.erie.gov/employment/public.phtml>. Complete job specifications are available for download at: www.erie.gov/fire.